

# Bucket safety

Minnesota inventor's release attachment is like an air bag for farm equipment

By Dee Goerge

A couple of years ago, Grant Hanson, a Glenwood, Minnesota, inventor, introduced his Safeloader, which has a cushion and pivot point that allows the bucket on a skid steer, tractor, or truck to give when it hits an immovable object. The bucket automatically rises over the object and levels off again, without a severe jar – sort of like air bags for farm equipment.

“The problem was that my Safeloader technology had to be incorporated into a loader's mainframe through a design change,” Hanson says. It occurred to him that he could make an attachment with the same cushion and pivot point features as his Safeloader that worked with quick-attach units.

“You don't have to change the framework of the loader,” Hanson says, pointing to his attachment that places the bucket about 1 foot forward of the vehicle driving it. It takes just a few minutes to pin his attachment to the vehicle and then to slip on a quick-attach bucket or snowplow.

## PREVENTING AN INJURY

Hanson is known as the Tractor Doctor. The tractor service repairman has heard stories of severe injuries and farm tractors breaking in two from hitting immovable objects. Farmers who have hit a hard object that jarred them severely or left them with broken tractor parts quickly ap-



Photograph: Manufacturer

Grant Hanson's invention, the Cushion Release Attachment, makes any front-end loader equipped with the industry-standard quick-attach mounting plate safer.

preciate his idea, Hanson says.

The invention can be used on tractors and skid steers with buckets and plows. When moving manure, for example, there may be hidden obstructions at ground level of a concrete feeding floor. Though the owner may be aware of them, a hired helper may not and would need to drive more slowly.

“With this invention, you can move faster and do it safely,” Hanson explains.

He says the leading edge of the bucket rises to various heights, according to how the linkage is set. Also, when put on new tractors or skid steers with computer sensors, the resistance needed to activate

the system can be set according to the speed the machine is operated. During slower operations, the system can be deactivated so the loader frame stays rigid.

Hanson discovered another benefit when he put his device on new-model skid steers, which have more of a forklift-style lift. While this lets buckets lift more weight, the bucket is so close to the skid steer that it's difficult to dump manure without getting it all over the loader. Adding the Cushion Release Attachment moves the bucket 1 foot forward and allows for cleaner dumping.

Hanson says he would like to license the patent on his Cushion Release Attachment to a loader manufacturer. ■



## learn more

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